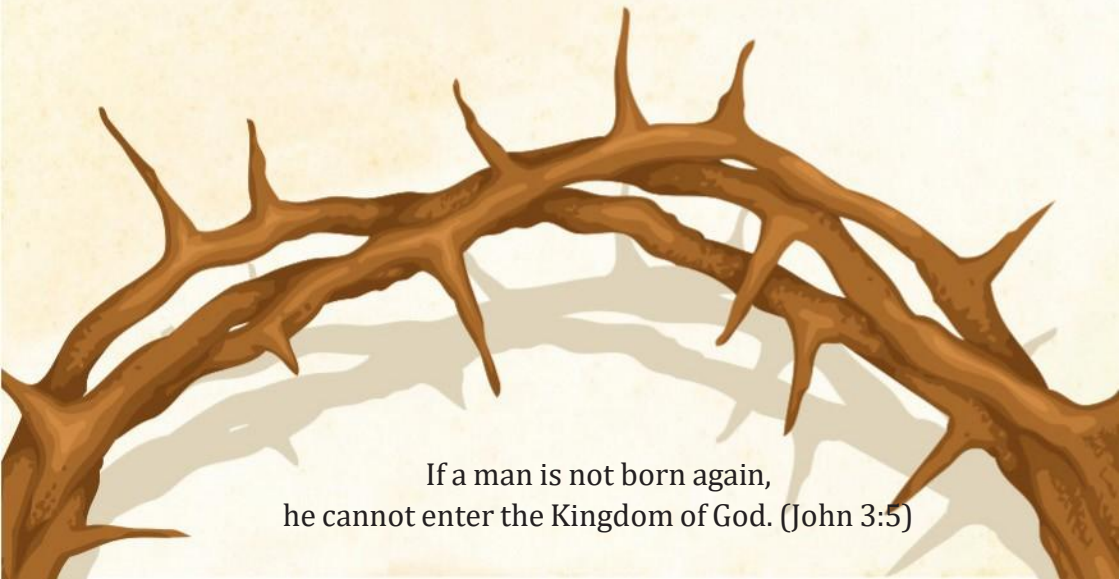
**Petru Loga**

# THE NEW BIRTH



If a man is not born again,
he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.** (John 1:1)
**The seed is the Word of God.** (Luke 8:11)

Being born again, not of corruptible
**seed**, but of incorruptible,
by **the Word of God**,
which liveth and abideth
forever.
And this is the Word which by the
gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter
1:23, 25)

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# Introduction

A "Kingdom with streets of gold," where there are no tears, no pain, and no more death, is something that may capture the attention of many. (And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4; And the street of the city was pure gold. Revelation 21:21)

We can confidently say there is no person who, when presented with a land offering a life full of joy – free from trouble, suffering, and death – would not desire such a Kingdom.

However, this Kingdom, with its "streets of gold," also involves spiritual realities that are difficult for the human mind to grasp – things that, to most people, seem like foolishness. (The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

These heavenly things are differ entirely from the things found in the world we were born into. For these reasons, the "Kingdom of God" remains a great mystery to many of us. (As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

We notice that when people are asked what happens after this life ends, and what we must do to live eternally in the Kingdom of God, the vast majority are deeply confused.

Because of a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, we see today how many people are misled by various theories about how to enter the Kingdom of God.

Most have come to believe that salvation (which for many lies only in the forgiveness of sins) can be obtained if we admire God for what He has done for us, if we believe in the sacrifice at the cross. Many believe that if we confess our sins and have a form of godliness that consists of gratitude for what the Lord Jesus has done for us, it is enough to have free entry into His eternal Kingdom.

Most of us stop at repentance, the work of the cross, the covenant of baptism, and the forgiveness of sins. We are left assuming that God will somehow perfect us through a mysterious process after death.

And this is where most of us remain. We went to church, had our seat, confessed our sins, were baptized, sang songs, supported the teachings of our church, lived a religious life – and believe that, through this, we will enter the Kingdom of God.

This is where the work of salvation stops for most – without realizing that **God's plan** includes both the restoration and the perfection of human character.

Almost no one believes that in order to be found worthy of the life that awaits us in His eternal Kingdom, we must grow to reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some... pastors and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints**, till we all come **unto a perfect man**, unto the **measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**. Ephesians 4:11-13)

## Earthly Matters

Many of us would like to get there, to take part in the Kingdom of God. But the spiritual values of this Kingdom are of no interest to most, being incompatible with the way we live. These values of God require us to give up many things that, until now, have been very useful to us in life.

From the moment we are small children, in order to reach our goals, we begin to rely – more or less – on the rule: "the end justifies the means." As schoolchildren, we resort to cheating, plagiarism, and lying. Later, as adults, we turn to other things: deceit, bribery, arguments, anger....

We can confidently say that there is no one who has never used a lie. Lying is used when someone is late for work, when arriving home late, when applying for a job, in business... It's easy to see that those who choose to give up lying must be willing to pay the price of losing the advantages it brings.

Another thing of great value to each of us is selfishness – self-love. From the moment we are born, we want as much as possible, only for ourselves, and our entire life ends up revolving around this.

However, we must recognize that self-love is not among the values of the Kingdom of God. It is the opposite of the love and selflessness that govern this Kingdom. (Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own. 1 Corinthians 13:4,5)

In this world, things are arranged in such a way – by "someone" – that in order to get by, we are tempted to rely on things that do not belong to the Kingdom of God. Satan comes to us just as he came to the Lord Jesus, tempting us with various "advantages" in order to trap us in his net. (All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Matthew 4:9)

He works in such a way that when we hear the Word of the Kingdom and want to exchange our old ways for the Kingdom's new ways, we find ourselves so entangled in the old that we cannot let them go. (...the sin which doth so easily beset us. Hebrews 12:1)

In order to make it through this life and maintain a decent standard of living, many of us give in to Satan's offers.

He offers us things we do not have access to – things we desire – but only on the condition that we use falsehood, theft, bribery, deceit. We will look at a few examples that show how we are caught in Satan's net through the advantages offered by theft accompanied by lies. These advantages can range from small and insignificant to very large.

**One example is working under the table (or off the books),** which means working without a registered employment contract or with a lower salary officially declared, while receiving the rest in untaxed cash. The advantage of accepting this "dark deal" is the significantly higher take-home pay. For those in this situation, giving up this "old" practice would be extremely difficult, because their income would drop significantly, and life would become much harder.

**To secure** a better standard of living, almost everyone pursues education, which ends with a diploma or qualification meant to help us later in life. We can see that during school exams—those required to obtain a diploma—Satan presents an offer that many accept.

He helps us get the diploma if we resort to cheating or stealing, thereby abandoning truth. Then he helps us find a good job, on the condition that we present, at the time of hiring, what we obtained through dishonesty.

***There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that maketh a lie!***

However, by presenting a diploma or certificate that falsely claims we have the necessary knowledge for the position, we end up living a lie. (And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27)

By using and enjoying what we have gained through theft and lies, we trap ourselves in a chain of iniquity from which many will never escape. (Every thief shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. Zechariah 5:3)

**Another example** of falling into Satan's trap is the offer of early retirement (due to illness), obtained through gifts and lies. This refers to deceitfully claiming illness in order to leave work early and receive benefits—whether from the state or a private pension fund—through manipulation. But lying, along with defrauding these systems and collecting income one is not rightfully entitled to, leads to disastrous spiritual consequences.

If someone in this situation later wants to repent, they will face a serious dilemma, because they cannot enter the Kingdom of God without returning the money obtained through deceit and lies.

In fact, the Lord requires everyone who wants to live in the Kingdom of righteousness to return what they acquired through dishonest means in their dark past. (Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord. Numbers 5:7 Lord... if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Luke 19:8-9)

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking we live righteously if we enjoy things obtained dishonestly – things that have wronged the state or others. (Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house... Thou hast consulted shame to thy house... and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Habakkuk 2:9-11)

**Another significant financial "benefit"** Satan offers us is the low cost of many services we receive. The condition he sets is that we agree to work with those who evade taxes – those who do not issue receipts or fiscal documents for the services they provide. If these services were legally taxed, household expenses would increase by 20-30%, which many of us would find difficult to afford.

Some examples include: building a house, painting, repairs to heating, electrical, or plumbing systems, apartment rent, car repairs, and agricultural work such as plowing, sowing, harvesting... buying and cutting firewood, drilling a well.

The Scripture clearly tells us where we stand when we engage in such practices. (But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Psalms 50:16-18; Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul. Proverbs 29:24)

Not paying taxes—such as sales tax or value added tax, depending on local legislation—can result in financial gain for both the buyer and the seller. For example, if you purchase firewood worth $1,000 without a receipt, and the combined local tax rate is 11%, you avoid paying $110 in taxes—a substantial amount, especially for someone with a modest income.

Sadly, many who claim to be "born again"— at least in Romania—are caught in this chain of iniquity.

Evading taxes shows that we do not love or seek the things above – the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. (For this cause pay ye tribute also: <u>for they are God's ministers</u>. Render therefore to all their dues. Romans 13:6,7)

If we do such things and claim to be children of the Light, we are lying and not living the truth. (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10; If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 6:23)

**Bribes and gifts** are another old practice still common today in many places – even with garbage collectors. If we stop giving gifts, this will bring us difficulties of all kinds, the hardest being in hospitals, where neglect and suffering will follow. However, if we accept suffering on the hospital bed because we refuse to give bribes, it will be crowned with the fruit it produces—namely, long-suffering. (Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect. James 1:3-4)

To live in the Kingdom of righteousness, God requires us to give up the old things – those that belong to the way of the world – even if we will suffer

losses, and to replace them with the new things of His Kingdom.

To help us be willing to give up the old things, we are given the promise of eternal life and the values of the Kingdom of righteousness – values that bring rest and peace to the soul. (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

If we want to be in the Kingdom of God, we must give up tax evasion, replace the old things with the new ones of the Kingdom, and not covet what belongs to others. (Let him that stole steal no more. Ephesians 4:28; Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Matthew 22:21; Neither shalt thou desire any thing that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21)

When we are determined to no longer use these old things – to crucify them – we will lose the material advantages we once had. Difficulties will arise in our lives, and we will face situations that are hard to bear. But it is worth trying. (In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33)

When troubles come, the Lord Jesus tells us that He will give us something of great value: His peace and rest. (And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. Isaiah 32:17)

All who understand the values of the Kingdom above and are determined to give up the old things must trust that God will not leave them and will provide for their daily needs. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33; Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5)

Most of those who are called to benefit from the Kingdom of God are not willing to pay this price, which often seems too high. But we must say that these things will keep them away from the Kingdom. God warns us that the one who sins does not know Him. (Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 1 John 3:6)

There is a distance as great as heaven is from earth between the one who indulges in sin and the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

If until now we have not submitted to the authority established by God—if we work off the books, drive without regard for traffic laws, feed ourselves on the world's television or internet, or speak evil of others—then we are still in the old state, where sin is a way of life, and we have not yet been born of God. (Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. Romans 13:1; For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16)

We must understand that even if we do many religious things – if we attend church, pray, speak in tongues, or prophesy – yet do not pursue righteousness, God tells us He does not know us! (Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth

the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:21-23)

If the Holy Spirit has not convicted us of our sinful state, it means the new birth has not taken place. The first thing the Holy Spirit does in the one who receives the Word of God with joy is to convict them of their sin. This is the beginning. The Spirit cannot dwell in a person without convicting them of this condition. (*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness... John 16:8*)

The Scripture makes a clear distinction between darkness and light. In the one who walks in the light, sin is no longer a way of life. He is marked by having given up the old things and by a hunger and thirst for righteousness and purity. (Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:8)

Let us be careful not to confuse the righteous person – born from above – who has a fall, with the one who has not yet given up the things of the kingdom of darkness. Let us not deceive ourselves by saying, "No one is without sin", and use that as an excuse to remain in the things of darkness. (He that committeth sin is of the devil. 1 John 3:8)

There is a difference as great as heaven is from earth between the one who lives in darkness, not submitting to the authorities established by God, and the one who is submitted but falls into sin out of a lack of watchfulness.

In the first case, one can speak of ongoing sin and walking in darkness, in the old things, without God – even if we are among those who say we have turned to Him. (If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. 1 John 1:6; He that committeth sin is of the devil. 1 John 3:8)

In the second case, one can speak of unintentional, unwanted sin. In this case, through the confession of the sin, there is the possibility of cleansing through the blood of the Lord. (But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7)

The Scripture tells us very clearly how we can examine ourselves: if we are a new creation, the old things have passed away. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

**The attitude of resistance** Another one of the old things that we find hard to give up – and which secures for us a way of life without too many troubles – is the attitude of resistance toward the one who wants to harm us. If someone tries to take what belongs to us or to humiliate us, a person has various solutions at hand to prevent this from happening. These solutions may be simple gestures of resistance, a harsh reply, an outburst of anger, or turning to the police or the courts.

**Let's take an example:** If we come home from work in the evening and someone has taken our parking spot, as a reaction of dissatisfaction, we

may lift their windshield wiper. Maybe they won't care and will just put it back. Then we will leave a threatening note... or call the police

To solve this problem, if we turn to worldly ways – through resistance – we will find a solution. But if we choose to give up resistance and turn to the things above – to non-resistance – then we will be left with no choice but to be humiliated.

Perhaps in small matters (like someone cutting in line at the doctor), we're willing not to resist. But when our financial stability or physical safety is at risk, our priorities shift, and we no longer see clearly the things and values of the Kingdom.

Yet if we want to live in God's presence and experience His peace, we must accept the cost of letting go of this old way which only brings unrest, and replace it with the Lord's teaching (Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. Matthew 5:38)

If we do not understand that we must carry our salvation through to the end, and grow into the full measure of Christ's fullness – if we do not understand that life in God's Kingdom means living in righteousness, being people of peace, long-suffering, and love – then we will still keep old things that we believe protect us from trouble.

We will keep a little resistance, so that when we are pressed from all sides, we can make life easier. We will keep a little cunning, a half-truth, undeclared work, bribery...

But to enter the Kingdom of God, we must sell everything we have – give up all old things – so that we can buy that treasure: the new things that replace the old. (The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Matthew 13:45, 46; But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness... Matthew 6:33)

The one who chooses the Kingdom must surrender to the mighty hand of God – and He will work. He will lay out the path that leads to peace, long-suffering, and love. (Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost. Hebrews 7:25)

**Self-reflection:**

– Are the old, earthly things still a way of life for you?

– Do you love the values of the Kingdom of God? Are you thirsty for righteousness?

– Have you sought the things above as a treasure and given up the things below?

# The Kingdom of God

Upon closer inspection, it's clear that the secular world we live in follows a standard entirely different from that of the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Scripture highlights some of the values of the world that are not found in this Kingdom: "... lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:2-4) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)

Because of Adam's fall, man is born into sin through natural birth, spiritually dead, and without the right to citizenship in the Kingdom of God. (That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens... having no hope.

***The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, is not of the Father, but is of the world.***

If we compare the righteousness of sinful man to **God's righteousness**, we find the difference is as vast as the gap between heaven and earth.

In the sinful condition in which man is born, it is impossible for him to enter this eternal Kingdom, where sin has no place. (Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever. Psalms 93:5; And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27)

The heavenly Kingdom was brought to earth by the Lord Jesus, so that anyone who hears the Gospel of the Kingdom and makes a firm decision to change their life may enter it. (He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1:11-12)

This Kingdom is primarily spiritual, described by Scripture as a realm of righteousness, peace, love, and joy – completely opposite to the kingdom of darkness in which the sinful man lives. (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

The values found in the Kingdom of God are also found in those who belong to it. The Scripture describes God as the Lord of righteousness, the Lord of peace, and love. (He is the Rock, his work is perfect. Deuteronomy 32:4; First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace. Hebrews 7:1, 2; God is love. 1 John 4:16)

If we search the Scriptures, we will discover the character traits that define both God and the Lord Jesus. These same traits also define those who will be found worthy to dwell with Them. (We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2; He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

One essential truth we must remember is that **God is perfect**, and so is everything that belongs to His Kingdom.

Just as God is perfect, the **Law** that governs His Kingdom is perfect, and so are His **ways**. Therefore, we can rightly say that everything belonging to the Kingdom of God is flawless or perfect. (Your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48; The law of the Lord is perfect. Psalms 19:7; As for God, his way is perfect. Psalm 18:30)

If everything in God's dwelling place is perfect, it follows that a sinful person cannot dwell with God unless they reach the **perfection required** by His eternal Kingdom. (Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.)

***Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.***

The Lord Jesus was sent as an **ambassador** of this Kingdom, with the mission of bringing this **Holy Territory** into our hearts.

He was sent by the heavenly Father to bring to lost humanity the **heavenly things** – the **laws** that govern the Kingdom – with the purpose of transforming our lives according to the standard from above, so that we would be found worthy to dwell eternally with the Father. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

He was sent to make **disciples**, teaching them to live according to the laws of the heavenly Kingdom, so that through obedience to these laws, we all may grow into the **full measure of His stature**. (I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also. Luke 4:43)

Then these disciples were sent into all the world, to make other disciples and to enroll in the school of Christ all who desire to enter it. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20)

This **school of discipleship** has one goal: for the disciple to become like the Teacher. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

## Things of the Kingdom of God

The Scripture teaches that the one who loves God wholeheartedly, denies themselves, and enters into a discipleship covenant with Him, becomes a new creation and is transferred into the Kingdom of glory. (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

For that person, everything becomes new – these new things being from above, from His Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

The things from above, prepared by God for us to walk in, are

completely different from the things of the world. They are things that do not reach the mind of the spiritually dead person. (But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

Even though the things from above are simple, they are contrary to what man naturally seeks; for many of us, they are foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

The Lord Jesus gives us the example of the city of Jerusalem, which did not know the heavenly things brought by Him – things that could have given it peace. (If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:42)

Through this statement, the Lord Jesus gives us a most serious warning: many of us will be in the same situation. For most people, the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 remains a mystery. (Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1)

Most think they must have unwavering confidence in the material things that may exist in the Kingdom of God or in God's promises.

Few understand that we must have unwavering confidence in the heavenly things that concern the spiritual life in the Kingdom of God. (If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? John 3:12)

The things of the Kingdom of God are referred to in Scripture as the things of God or the things of the Spirit. These are a faithful reflection of both the nature of the Kingdom and the heart of God.

The things from above are divided into two categories:

- First, the **commandments of Christ**, which are the **raw material;**
- Second, the **fruit of the Spirit**, which is the **final product**.

The Holy Spirit urges us to keep the Lord's commandments. And if we allow ourselves to be led by Him, we will come to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Many have heard of the fruit of the Spirit, but few have experienced walking in the things from above that produce it. They can be truly known only if we experience them by keeping the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material of the things from above. (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5; And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6)

The Word of Scripture tells us to seek the things of the Kingdom of God – those from above – not the things of the earth – those from below – because these heavenly things transform our character and bring peace. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

However, in order to think about the things above and then pursue them, the main condition is to know them. Sadly, we observe that for many, the Kingdom of God and the things within it remain a mystery – they fail to

come to know them.

Upon closer examination, we can see that most of those who claim to be born again (a new creation) still think about and pursue only the old, earthly things.

**Dear reader, could this describe you?** If you find yourself in this situation, you are in great danger!

The Apostle Paul mourns for such people, because their end will be destruction. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18-19)

These things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in, are foolishness to the natural (carnal) man. Many do not pursue them because they do not understand that these things lead to the perfection of character.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that only those who do not know the Word of God fall into the category of the carnal man. The carnal man is anyone who rejects and does not walk according to the things of the Spirit – even if he has been baptized and claims to be born from above. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Matthew 13:19)

The carnal man will not accept to give up an "old thing" (such as working off the books or resisting others), which helps him get by in this life, in exchange for something new from the Kingdom – something that will bring him many "troubles" (like righteousness, which involves paying taxes or not resisting evil). The carnal man will not give up "all he has" for something whose purpose he does not understand.

Yet we must all understand that, in order to be found worthy to dwell with God, a person must come to acquire the character traits of the Lord Jesus – that is, to reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Let us take, for example, **long-suffering**, a character trait of the Lord Jesus and one of the most important things in the Kingdom of God. Let us ask ourselves: **How can we come to have this trait imprinted in our character?**

The Holy Scripture tells us that we must go through the **school of patience**, which does its work perfect. This is a school through which each of us must pass, because only in this way can our character be perfected. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire. James 1:2-4)

To attain this beautiful character trait, one of the things we must do is **not resist those who do us harm**.

**Non-resistance is one of the things from above and must become a new way of life for us**. When trials and hardship come, we must put it into practice, following in the footsteps of our spiritual fathers, who themselves follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 4:15)

If we look more closely, we will notice that many who believe they

know God and think they are "born from above" naturally resort to **resistance** – whether in speech or through legal means. This is one of the earthly was people solve their many problems in this world, and they do not see why they should give it up.

To truly know God, we must give up the attitude of resistance, which is from below, and replace it with non-resistance. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

For those who have not yet practiced non-resistance – a heavenly teaching brought by the Lord Jesus – we can say from personal experience that only through it will they reach the blessed place of experiencing long-suffering, one of the defining character traits of the Lord Jesus.

The natural man runs from suffering, from humiliation... but this is the path to knowing God and perfecting our character.

Let us imagine being employed by a boss who insults us, cuts our pay, and forces us to work overtime. What would we do?

Would we look with great joy at this opportunity to cultivate long-suffering within us? Or would we be dissatisfied and resist at every opportunity, telling everyone about the difficult situation we are going through? (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. James 1:2)

If someone insults you and anger rises within you, what will you do? Will you "hold water in your mouth" so that you cannot speak, as some teach today? Or will you choose not to resist, cultivating patience as the Lord teaches us?

**This is the path to truly knowing the long-suffering of the Lord Jesus**. (But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 1 Peter 2:20)

If we do not understand – and are not deeply convinced – that **non-resistance is one of the things of the Spirit**, things that have not entered the heart of man, then we certainly will not sell all we have. We will not give up anger, one of the old, earthly things that help us maintain what the world calls a "normal life".

Only if we love long-suffering with all our heart – one of the things hoped for, from above – and if we seek it as a treasure, only if we live according to the guidance and leading of the Spirit, only then will we come to know it. Only in this way will we come to know the heart of God and be conformed to His likeness. (And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God. John 17:3; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness. Ephesians 4:24)

If we do not love and do not keep the command from above, which tells us not to resist those who do us harm, we will not come to experience long-suffering, and even less the peace and rest for the soul. (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Rom. 8:6)

***To be spiritually minded is life and peace!***

Without long-suffering, you will not be able to bless those who curse you, you will not be able to be a peacemaker, nor to give food to your enemy. Likewise, we will not come to know God, who is long-suffering, full of mercy, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness.
(The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. Psalms 145:8; The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness. Exodus 34:6)

If until now we have not loved the heavenly things found in the Kingdom of God – namely, the teaching of the Lord Jesus, which tells us not to resist, not to judge – if we do not find delight in His commands, then we are not drawn to the things from above and do not belong to His Kingdom. (Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. Psalms 119:92)

If we have not yet sought and walked after these things from above, then we can be certain that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us, because we do not walk after the things of the Spirit and do not live according to His guidance. (Romans 8:6)

There can be no talk of a new beginning, of being born again, if we have not cast off the old things and do not love the new things of the Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17,18)

**Personal Reflection:**

- Do you walk in non-resistance, or is resistance your way of life?
- Do you seek long-suffering as a treasure?
- Do you desire to have long-suffering as part of your character?

## The Righteousness of the Kingdom of God

Another thing from above, after which we must walk and which defines the Kingdom of God, is **righteousness**, or more precisely, **the absence of sin**. (Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever. Psalm 93)

The dictionary defines righteousness as: **without sin, pure, immaculate, unblemished, clean**.

The Kingdom of God is described in the Word of Scripture as a **Kingdom of righteousness**. (Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13)

The Son of God said that we must seek not only the Kingdom of God, but also **His righteousness**, which means that the Kingdom of God is much more than a place with streets of gold (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33).

We find written in Scripture that the Kingdom of God does not consist of earthly pleasures, of food and drink, or of the things the natural man seeks. In this Kingdom, we find the righteousness in which God dwells, His peace, and the things from above that define this Kingdom (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17).

The Word of Scripture tells us that all who are in the Kingdom of God **love righteousness and hate iniquity**. Only those who **hunger and thirst** for the values of righteousness from the heavenly Kingdom can dwell in it (Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matthew 5:6).

The Word of Scripture warns us that **whoever does not desire and does not live in righteousness is not accepted** into this Kingdom of righteousness (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10).

Upon closer inspection, we can observe that there are many who believe they are born again, who speak in tongues, who prophesy, who perform miracles—yet do not live a life of righteousness. However, at the end of life, they will face a great surprise (Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:22–23).

To avoid being deceived, we have at our disposal a simple criterion by which each person can easily verify whether they are part of this Kingdom. The Word of Scripture, which does not lie, says that **only those who live in righteousness are born again of God** (If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 1 John 2:29; Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:7).

The Holy Scripture clearly states that **if our righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**, who lived according to the standard of the Law of Moses, **we shall by no means enter this Kingdom** (For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20).

The righteousness of the Kingdom from above is far superior to the righteousness in which those who kept the law of Moses lived, where we find the commandments: Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's... (Deuteronomy 5:21)

To describe the righteousness of the Pharisees, we can look at the apostle Paul before his conversion. He was a Pharisee and lived a very strict life according to the law of Moses, so that he could say concerning the

righteousness which is in the law, that he was blameless (Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Philippians 3:5).

The Holy Scripture tells us that entry into the Kingdom of God takes place during this present life, not after we depart into eternity, as most believe (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13–14).

We are called to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom now, not after we leave the earth. Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be able to see and enter this Kingdom (Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him Acts 10:34–35).

God's plan is not limited to a cheap salvation, which consists only in repentance (putting off the old man) and the forgiveness of sins, but it includes the restoration of the image of God in us (putting on the new man) and bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the righteousness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Putting on the new man is the boundary between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of God (And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24).

We will now list some of these things from above that are found in the Kingdom:

**Integrity / Fairness**

Whoever loves righteousness and hates iniquity receives the right to enter this Kingdom. The one who receives the right to enter the Kingdom of righteousness does not live in sin, does not rejoice in iniquity, does not deceive, does not use bribes or gifts, does not walk in deceit, and does not slander (Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:6, 8, 10).

Those who are in the Kingdom of righteousness do not covet anything that belongs to their neighbor. They do not use or appropriate what belongs to others. They do not rejoice in things that are not theirs.

Let us take a practical example: they do not take things from the workplace that do not belong to them. They do not use the company car, phone, or other resources for personal purposes. They do not have stolen or pirated software on their computers (Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's... anything that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21).

They do not work illegally, do not steal taxes from the State, and do not covet anything that is not theirs (Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Matthew 22:21. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers. Romans 13:6).

When they have exams, they do not cheat or steal what they have not

learned.

If they have in their possession things they acquired dishonestly while living in darkness, they will cease using them, return them, and make restitution where possible (Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. Numbers 5:7).

They avoid all greed for money. They are citizens of the household of God, cared for by the heavenly Father through the church, which is the body of Christ. They do not seek social assistance from outsiders, such as the State (from the Philistines), for heating, electricity, and so on. They follow the example of Abraham, who did not accept to receive the cave of Machpelah for free from the Hittites (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33).

The Father (who is in the Kingdom of God) does not use lies, deceit, or trickery, and does not rejoice in iniquity by taking money from the State for childcare leave up to two years when in reality the mother is the one caring for the child.

They also do not collaborate with the employer to intentionally obtain unemployment benefits in order to enjoy unearned money (Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5).

**Self-examination:** Do you have things from work or elsewhere that you have taken and now use? Do you have unlicensed software on your computer? Do you work illegally or withhold taxes that you owe to the State? When you apply for money from the State (subsidies, unemployment, social assistance, childcare leave...), do you use lies when filling out the forms? If you do such things, do not deceive yourself by believing that you are in the Kingdom of God.

Citizens of this Kingdom **hate iniquity**, hate every way of lying, and every opportunity to sin. They hate the practice of giving or receiving bribes (He that hateth gifts shall live. Proverbs 15:27). Scripture tells us that those who practice bribery have a corrupt heart (A gift destroyeth the heart. Ecclesiastes 7:7).

**Bribery**, according to the dictionary: a sum of money or objects received, offered, or promised to a person in order to cause them to violate their duties or to perform their duties more conscientiously (And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment 1 Samuel 8:3).

Perhaps few of us are in a position that gives us the opportunity to receive gifts or bribes, but most are in situations where they are tempted to give. Many, in order to solve their problems, find themselves using gifts or bribes.

Perhaps until now, giving bribes (gifts) has not been viewed as sin, but we must understand that when we initiate the rewarding of a service that has already been paid for—whether public or private—we give the other person an opportunity to sin, to fall into transgression.

Through our gesture, we are the ones who provoke the other to break the Word of God—we are the ones who corrupt their heart.

The teaching of the Kingdom warns us in the most serious way, showing us how grave it is to tempt souls and corrupt their hearts (It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck. Luke 17:1.2).

To corrupt our hearts, Satan brings many such occasions into our lives (an example being in the hospital, at the doctor). When we are on the hospital bed and in need, if we cause the nurse (or sister) to be more kind by placing something in her pocket, then we are the ones who tempt her, bringing her the occasion to sin. And it may happen that the nurse or sister is also a believer.

Through our gift, we ask her to take more care of us, and she will end up neglecting the one who has nothing to give. By receiving these gifts, she will corrupt her heart and wrong the one who has nothing. She will break the Word of God, which forbids her to receive gifts (And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. Exodus 23:8).

God commands her not to receive gifts, and we tempt her to break the Word of God. Let us ask ourselves: If we do this, are we not serving Satan?

To understand the gravity of this sin, it is helpful to observe that even the laws of the secular world condemn more severely the one who tempts another to take a bribe than the one who accepts it.

Citizens of the Kingdom must always be on alert not to be among those who bring occasions to sin, not to do the work of the evil one (Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Romans 14:13).

We are aware that those who choose to live in the righteousness of Christ will lose the advantages that gifts and bribes bring. However, they will be rewarded with peace and rest from above, peace that certifies their belonging to the Kingdom (And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah 32:17).

**Pure Heart**

Those who belong to the Kingdom from above do not defile their hearts with unclean things. They do not walk in the counsel of the wicked, do not set any wicked thing before their eyes, cover their eyes so as not to see evil, and stop their ears so as not to hear inappropriate words (Isaiah 33:15).

They do not love the things that feed and awaken the lusts of the flesh and do not use them; some of these being the publications of the world (magazines, books, newspapers), the radio of the world, and the television or internet of the world (Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners Psalm 1:1).

Those who are in the Kingdom—in the body of Christ—watch carefully that there is no one among them who defiles their heart with the things of the

world and thereby contaminates the others (Looking diligently lest any man fail... Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau. Hebrews 12:15.16). They watch over one another, so that each of them may have a pure eye and a pure heart.

They watch that the use of the internet is limited to what is necessary (at work, for bank payments, taxes, etc.), in a controlled and filtered manner, so as not to give Satan the opportunity to tempt and feed the flesh or awaken lusts (Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity Psalm 119:37. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof Romans 13:14).

Those who are in the Kingdom of God are called to wear modest clothing. They will not wear revealing garments, so as not to bring an occasion of sin to their fellow men (... that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety 1 Timothy 2:9).

Therefore, they do not go to places such as beaches or other public areas where people are dressed indecently, so as not to defile their eyes by looking at the undressed, and not to give others the occasion to lust after their bodies and sin.

They are very careful regarding the lust of the eyes, because it affects the entire body (The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness Luke 11:34. I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job 31:1).

They keep their hearts pure, because only in this way will they see God (Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God Matthew 5:8). For this reason, they have removed from before their eyes everything that causes them to fall into sin (I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside Psalm 101:3. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee Matthew 18:9).

They avoid and flee from the lusts of the flesh, which harm the soul (Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul 1 Peter 2:11. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world 1 John 2:16).

**In conclusion:** If we are greedy for money and covet the goods of the "Egyptians," if we do not want to pay our taxes, if we work illegally, if we give bribes at the hospital or elsewhere, if the television or internet of the world (Facebook, YouTube...) is our daily nourishment... if until now we have not loved the things from above—namely, the commandments of the Lord Jesus, which call us to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom—if we do not delight in them, then we must be certain that we are not part of the Kingdom of righteousness.

**Personal Examination:**

- Do you seek the Kingdom of righteousness as a treasure of great value?

- Are you hungry and thirsty for righteousness? Do you strive to be immaculate, without sin?
- Do you live according to the laws of righteousness that govern the Kingdom of God?

## The Peace of the Kingdom of God

Another precious thing found in the Kingdom of God is the peace and rest that reigns within it. **Dictionary definition**: Absence of disturbances, conflicts, strife; harmony, reconciliation, understanding. *To break the peace* = to come into conflict with someone.

The peaceful Kingdom of Christ has often been misunderstood, even by those who claim to be believers. Very few truly understand, accept, and live according to this heavenly standard.

Many do not see that the Lord of peace came to bring to earth the peace that governs in the heavenly Kingdom, peace that is found on the perfect way of God (To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace Luke 1:79).

Many do not notice that the Gospel of the Kingdom is, in fact, the Gospel of peace (The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ Acts 10:36. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means 2 Thessalonians 3:16. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

When the Lord Jesus says, *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth*, He tells us that the peace which is in heaven must also be on earth among those who belong to Him (Glory to God... and on earth peace, good will toward men Luke 2:14. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest Luke 19:38).

It is extremely important to understand that the law of peace which governs in the heavenly Kingdom also governs on earth among those who belong to it (And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more Isaiah 2:4).

All citizens born of God must keep this law. Therefore, they must no longer learn war or opposition, but live in perfect peace with one another, be gentle, easily persuaded, bless one another, not speak evil, not be angry, not quarrel, not be hostile, not judge, not oppose their fellow men, and not do harm to anyone.

All who have chosen to keep their feet on the path of peace do not initiate or enter into conflicts. They do not resist in order to seek justice for themselves (But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also Matthew 5:39.40).

When interacting with citizens of the kingdom of darkness, conflict situations may arise. To resolve these issues and to maintain peace as much

as it depends on them, they apply the law of the Kingdom from above, which takes precedence over the law of the lower kingdom (If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men Romans 12:18. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it 1 Peter 3:11).

When they are wronged, in order to preserve the peace from above, they have only one option: to address their Master and then joyfully submit to His decision. They do not rely on the police, the courts, or other institutions available to the citizens of the other kingdom (Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously 1 Peter 2:23).

This law of peace will bring troubles and suffering for those who enter the Kingdom of God. When conflict is initiated by those in the world, the attitude of non-resistance shown by the believer will often result in loss and humiliation. Many times, they will be mocked and humiliated even by members of their own household.

In order not to disturb the peace and rest of heart to which they have been called, they will follow the example of their Lord (For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps 1 Peter 2:21. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord Hebrews 12:14).

This peace guards their hearts and minds in Christ. They will do nothing that would disturb their heart or spoil its rest (And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus Philippians 4:7).

The only things they have at their disposal when persecuted are long-suffering and fleeing (But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another Matthew 10:23).

Peace and rest are the result of the heart's attitude—of living in righteousness, of renouncing opposition, anger, and judgment—and this is achieved by keeping the teachings of Christ (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace Romans 8:6. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes Luke 19:42).

To reach the rest and peace of the Kingdom of God, we must apply the teaching brought from heaven by the Lord Jesus (Judge not, that ye be not judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. If someone compels you to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. If someone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. If someone smites you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also Matthew 5:39–42. Give to every man that asketh of thee Luke 6:30).

Even if we are innocent, opposition produces conflict, not peace, and may give the other person an occasion to be troubled, to become angry, or in other words, to sin (Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way Romans 14:13. It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come Luke 17:1).

In practice, the one who brings the occasion to sin is doing the work of Satan, which is very serious in the eyes of God. It would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one to stumble (Luke 17:2).

We must be attentive in every conflictual situation and be peacemakers. If we are at peace, we must do everything that depends on us to help the other person also be at peace (If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men Romans 12:18).

Those who belong to the Kingdom from above pursue the peace that comes from walking after the things above (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace Romans 8:6. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God Matthew 5:9).

The Lord Jesus, as the representative of the Kingdom of God, was the first to keep this teaching of non-resistance and of preserving peace in an absolute way, and He taught us to live as He lived (If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me Luke 9:23. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked 1 John 2:6).

We can observe the Lord's attitude when He was asked to pay the temple tax. Although He was not obligated to pay it, He did everything within His power to avoid conflict or disturbance, so as not to give others an occasion to sin (What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea... Matthew 17:24–27)

When He was captured to be put to death, He did not resist, nor did He escalate the conflict. He allowed Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter (He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth Isaiah 53:7).

***He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.***

The Lord had a heart full of peace and rest, which was not troubled by the appearance of conflict. His lack of resistance shows us how the citizens of the Kingdom of Christ ought to be (Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him Matthew 26:50)

On the opposite side, we see the turmoil and anger present in His disciple Peter. He resisted and actively participated in the conflict. The unrest manifested in Peter is characteristic of the nature of the kingdom of darkness (We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others Ephesians 2:3. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked Isaiah 57:21).

As citizens of the Kingdom, the natural instinct to resist must be crucified in order to allow peace and rest to enter our souls (Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls Matthew

11:29).

**Personal Examination:**

- Do you pursue peace with all men, as a treasure of great value?
- If a conflict arises, can you say as the Lord Jesus said: *Friend, do what you came for*?
- Do you remain in peace like the Lord Jesus, or are you troubled like Peter?
  (And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus Philippians 4:7)

## The Love of the Kingdom of God

One of the fundamental values—one of the things from above—that defines the Kingdom of God is **love** (God is love. 1 John 4:8; Finally, brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11).

Many of us do not understand that without the "love from above," we will not reach the goal of dwelling together with God.

Scripture tells us that we will not enter the Kingdom of love if we do not love God—who is love—with all our heart, and if we do not desire this character trait (He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4:8).

Love is the bond that unites all the citizens of the Kingdom of God (And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Colossians 3:14).

To reach this standard, we must adopt the law of love that governs the territory of the Kingdom (Charity seeketh not her own. 1 Corinthians 13:5).

Love is selfless; it does not seek its own benefit, but that of others. Love from above does not enter our hearts by chance—it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, produced when we keep the teachings of Christ (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 2 John 1:6).

Whoever follows the school of discipleship under Christ will ultimately bear the fruit of love from above (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5).

Between the love that comes from above and natural, earthly love, there is a distance as great as from heaven to earth. Love from above is patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, does not behave unseemly, does not seek its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4–8).

To learn and experience this perfect love, God places us in His family, the Church—that is, in the Body of Christ (But now hath God set the

members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him 1 Corinthians 12:18).

The Church is the Lord's school, and He lovingly cares for it (For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church Ephesians 5:29).

The Body of Christ, which is the Church, is part of God's plan for the perfection of the saints. It is the place where love from above is both taught and practiced—where infants, children, and young people learn from the elders to clothe themselves with patience, kindness, to walk in holiness, to forgive, to love—in other words, to walk after the things from above, after the things of the Spirit (... for the perfecting of the saints... for the edifying of the body of Christ Ephesians 4:12).

Here we learn to live in righteousness and peace, to seek the good of others, and to no longer live for ourselves (But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1 Corinthians 12:7; For none of us liveth to himself. Romans 14:7; Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. 1 Corinthians 10:24).

We learn to be closely knit together and to bear one another's burdens (From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:16; Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2).

In the Church, we are taught to love even those outside of it—even those who do us harm. When we come into contact with those outside the Kingdom of love, we must follow the example of the Lord: to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, because we are children of our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:44).

To obtain this love—which the natural mind cannot comprehend—it can only be through following the school where the teachings of Christ are taught. Otherwise, no matter how hard we try to produce love, it will not happen. He holds the recipe for love, and whoever follows it will obtain it (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 2 John 1:6. Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5).

We will come to love our fellow men if we learn to keep the Word of Christ (By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 1 John 5:2-3; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:20).

Love will be poured into our hearts to the extent that, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we accept and keep the teachings of the Lord Jesus (And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5).

To better understand this, let us consider a situation that each of us may face at some point. Suppose that in the case of an inheritance—land, a house, or similar—a brother demands that we give him part of what rightfully belongs to us.

If we belong to the world, we will have at our disposal the solutions the world offers: resistance through words, through anger, or through legal action. But if we are citizens of the Kingdom, we must take a different position. We must act according to the solutions given by the law of the Kingdom. The requirements for those who are part of the Kingdom are: to live in peace with all men, to have long-suffering, and to be full of kindness (Follow peace with all men... Hebrews 12:14).

The first thing we must do is, as much as it depends on us, not to give the other person an occasion to sin. We must do everything we can not to provoke him to anger or unrest. For this, we have at our disposal the commandments that lead to peace (Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9; If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Romans 12:18).

To remain in the peace of Christ, we must not resist the one who wants to take by force what belongs to us (But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. Matthew 5:39; And him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also Luke 6:29).

Then, we must do something more—something that to the worldly mind seems like foolishness. To heap coals of fire on his head, we must be willing to give him the "cloke" as well, not just the thing he wants to take from us (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. Matthew 5:40).

This teaching, which leads us to give even more, does not come from human logic—it comes from above (If thine enemy hunger, feed him. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:20.21).

If he wants to take part of the land that belongs to us, we should show him that we are willing to give more than he wants to take (And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:41).

This attitude—of being ready to give more when something is taken from us by force—is not of human nature. It does not come naturally, but only through keeping the laws of the Kingdom from above. Keeping the commandments of Christ will lead us to perfect love, which casts out fear and gives us full confidence on the day of judgment (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6; Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. 1 John 4:17).

## The Joy of the Kingdom of God

When we are admitted to the school we dreamed of attending, or when we are hired for a position we greatly desired, we cannot help but rejoice. However, this cannot compare to the joy of knowing that we have been admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, that our names are written in heaven to dwell eternally with the righteous (Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20).

It is a great joy to know that you have been admitted to the school of Christ, that you have been chosen by the Lord to work with you, to perfect

you, and to make you like Him (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire. James 1:2–4).

For many, it is unbearable to be persecuted or mocked, but for those who have chosen the values of the Kingdom, it is a joy to know that they are counted worthy to be shaped in the school of suffering (And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Acts 5:41).

Likewise, for most people, losing the possessions they have worked for is a deeply distressing experience—one that often brings them to the edge of despair. But for those who have chosen the Kingdom of God, it is a reason for joy when the Lord deems them worthy to suffer the loss of the goods necessary for life (... and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods. Hebrews 10:34).

Compared to the joy that the world gives—often following gain or promotion—those who are in the Kingdom rejoice when they go through trials, with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit (And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you. Colossians 1:24).

When we keep the Word of peace and righteousness, persecution will come—but so will joy (Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10).

The full joy that comes from the Holy Spirit is what we will find in the eternal Kingdom, and it will be everlasting (And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35:10).

Joy is the result of keeping the Word of Christ. It is a crown of the fruit of the Spirit—the joy of being refined through trials in order to reach patience, kindness, gentleness, love (Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Hebrews 12:2).

## God's Plan for Man

From reading the Scripture, we can see that in His eternal plan, God intended not only to create beings superior to angels, but His purpose was to create a being in which His nature would be manifested—one made in His image and likeness. He created a being entirely distinct from anything He had created before (And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Genesis 1:26–27).

We can affirm with certainty that when God created man, He had a completely different purpose than He had for the angels, who were created as

servants. God decided to make brothers for the Lord Jesus, to populate His Kingdom with beings who would be like His Son.

We have a soul and a spirit. He endowed us with the capacity to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love, and to choose. This is because He determined beforehand, in His eternal plan, that we should be made like Him (For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29)

God created us and endowed us with these capacities so that we might use them. It is our responsibility to value them and to work together with Him in order to reach the stature He has appointed. This is the highest calling to which man can aspire (And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24).

If the first man was deceived by Satan and his sin passed upon all, this does not mean that there was any flaw in God's plan. All things happened exactly as foreseen in the eternal plan which God prepared with great care, down to the smallest detail.

God begins this work of restoring the image of Christ in man at the moment of new birth, and He has all power to bring us to the perfection required by the standard of His Kingdom (Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6).

God's plan is not limited to a shallow salvation that consists only in repentance (putting off the old man) and the forgiveness of sins. It includes the restoration of the image of God in us (putting on the new man) and bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13).

To illustrate this, we can think of the construction of a house. The builder begins with the foundation, and at the end, the house is completed down to the smallest details.

So it is with God's school. He begins the work of restoring His image in man, and He completes it with precision and care (And he gave some... pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints... till we all come... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11–13).

If man, created by God, is capable of completing what he begins down to the smallest detail, how much more is God able to do so. God has the most perfect school of discipleship, in which He works personally with every man who responds to His call.

He causes us to be born again and transforms us step by step into His image, until we reach the stature of His Son (But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18).

It is a perfect plan, drawn up with great precision, point by point, without missing even the smallest detail. What He begins, He brings to completion (Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:8).

All things that appear in our lives are foreseen by God to work on our character, until we come to resemble the Lord Jesus (And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God... to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28).

In His eternal plan, God determined to make us His sons, to grow and become like Him (We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2).

## The Purpose of Christ's Word

In the world, humanity lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19). There is none that doeth good. Because man has an inclination toward evil, the secular world has laws to make coexistence possible. These laws condemn and punish evil deeds, but they have no power to bring man to perfection.

The Scripture tells us the same about the law of Moses, which was "added" because of transgressions (Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions. Galatians 3:19).

However, in the heavenly Kingdom, things are not as they are in the world. Those who belong to the eternal Kingdom of God live in the light and are made perfect, even as He is (We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2).

To reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the law of the Kingdom—the law of Christ—was given to us. It addresses the inner man, aiming to transform the heart. This law is far superior to the law of Moses (Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. 1 Corinthians 9:21).

We emphasize that the law of the Kingdom, also called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, must not be confused with the law of Moses (Romans 8:2). The law is holy and just (Romans 7:12), but it could not make man perfect (... for the law made nothing perfect. Hebrews 7:19. For the law having a shadow of good things to come... can never... make the comers thereunto perfect. Hebrews 10:1).

The law of the Kingdom—the law of Christ—is far superior to the moral law of Moses and has as its goal to make us like Him, to form in us His character (He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2).

Thus, the one who fulfills the law of Christ does not abolish the law of Moses, but rather confirms it (Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. Romans 3:31. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk... after the Spirit. Romans 8:4).

Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the laws of God express His way of thinking—His very nature (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1; The gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4).

It is essential to understand that all the commandments by which we are called to live are a faithful reflection of His character. His commandments show us how He lived; they reveal His ways. All—absolutely all—of His

commandments represent Him.

Each teaching (commandment) in the Gospel contains within it a trait of the Lord Jesus. Hidden within it is the perfect beauty of His character.

Just as the human embryo contains all the traits of the one who is to be born, so the traits of the Lord Jesus are hidden in the seed of God (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11). Therefore, we cannot neglect any commandment, for the traits of the Lord are found in His commandments.

Thus, we may rightly say that the Lord places His laws in our hearts in order to rewrite—to imprint—His image in us (I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them Hebrews 10:16. We... have the mind of Christ 1 Corinthians 2:16).

## Drawn by the Beauty of Christ's Character

Looking at His ways and His teachings, we are in fact looking at the beauty of Christ, who is the image of God. His commandments should be a delight to us because they represent Him. (I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Psalms 119:47; Thy commandments are my delight. Psalms 119:143)

Therefore, the Lord Jesus says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments..." (John 14:15) — meaning that whoever loves Me also loves My commandments and finds delight in them, because My commandments express My character; they show what I am like.

God does not call us to appreciate Him only because He offers us an eternal Kingdom with streets of gold, or because He saves us from hell. These things alone will not cause us to fall in love with Him or to desire to follow Him in order to become like Him.

He calls us not only to appreciate what He has done for us, but to become like Him. He calls us to fall in love with Him, and for this purpose, He reveals to us the beauty of His perfect character. (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32)

***And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.***

Therefore, in His love for the crown of His creation, God uses His messengers to speak to us about the Lord Jesus, to show us the traits of His heart. He uses His disciples to describe to us the image of God, to reveal the beauty of His heart, and to draw us to Himself through His perfect beauty.

No one can be drawn to His beauty if they have not heard about Him, if they do not see the traits of His heart, if they do not know His ways and His nature. (And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher. Romans 10:14; No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. John 6:44)

If we were called only to repentance in order to avoid hell and walk on streets of gold, without being shown the beauty of the Lord's heart—if we were not told that His purpose is for us to bear His character traits—then we must be careful, because those who brought us such a message delivered a false, incomplete gospel.

They were not sent by God. If we received such a gospel, we were deceived by Satan.

Let us honestly ask ourselves: What kind of gospel was brought to us? Were there people who preached only one message—that if we do not repent, we will suffer eternal hell? Were we taught to appreciate Him and be thankful only for what He did for us on the cross?

Or were there messengers of God who also revealed to us the beauty of the Lord's heart? Was I drawn to His character traits? Did love awaken in us, and did we begin to desire to have the same beautiful traits that He has?

God draws us with all His beauty and will cause all the beauty of His heart to pass before us. Just as He showed Moses the beauty of His heart, so He will show it to us. (I will make all my goodness pass before thee. Exodus 33:19) He does this so that we may fall in love with the traits of His heart, so that love may be awakened in us.

David's fervent desire (which should be the desire of every lover of the Lord) was to dwell all his life in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. Psalms 27:4)

If we come to God out of fear of hell, we have not experienced the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

***The Gospel of Christ is the image of God!***

If we are drawn by the beauty of the Lord Jesus' character traits and we admire them, then we will begin to desire them as well—this is the starting point.

(I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. Song of Solomon 5:8)

No one can truly admire and love Him with all their heart out of fear of eternal punishment. That love can only be awakened if one is drawn by the radiance of the Lord, by the radiance of His Word. Only then is the fervent desire to be like Him stirred within us. Only in this way can the purpose for which we were created be fulfilled: to be like the Lord Jesus, our Bridegroom.

If we have not begun here—if we are not drawn by the beauty of His heart, if His commandments and His ways are not our delight—then the new life has not yet begun. (No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. John 6:44)

If we are drawn by the beauty of His perfect character, this will lead to admiration and love. Love will be awakened in us, along with the desire to become His bride. (I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. Song of Solomon 8:4)

He draws us with the beauty of His character, with the beauty of His Kingdom, and He patiently waits for admiration and love to awaken in us—both for Him and for His ways. (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32)

When He becomes to us like a treasure of great value, and we are willing to give up the old things, then the Lord will enter into a relationship with us by making a covenant of love, so that we may belong to Him. (The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44)

This is not a covenant like those in business relationships, but a covenant of marriage—a covenant of love. (Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Ezekiel 16:8; Thus saith the Lord:... I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3)

God knows our hearts. He knows when we truly find and admire His beauty—when love arises from the depths of our heart. (God, which knoweth the hearts... Acts 15:8)

Only then are we ready to follow Him and to keep the Word of the Lord Jesus. Only then does the covenant between Him and us begin. (If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:15)

The beauty of the heart of the Lord Jesus must be for us the greatest treasure a person can ever find. (What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold... This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon 5:9–16)

Our relationship with the Lord Jesus must be like the engagement between a young man and a young woman—entered into only through mutual admiration and wholehearted love. The Lord Jesus does not enter into a covenant with us simply because we want to avoid hell or because He offers us streets of gold in His eternal Kingdom.

He will not enter into this love relationship with us unless we are drawn by His beauty—unless we love Him more than anyone else. (He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37)

Only someone in love can delight in the words spoken by the one they admire and love. (I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake. Song of Solomon 5:6; I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Psalm 119:47; My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Psalm 119:20)

Only in this way will the Lord enter into a covenant with us—if our purpose is to live in a love relationship with Him and to prepare ourselves as a bride for the wedding with our Bridegroom. (The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Revelation 19:7)

The Scripture tells us that in order to be freed from the dominion of the devil, to be cleansed from sin, to be reconciled with God, to be redeemed, and to make the new birth and our transfer into His Kingdom possible, the Son of God accepted to die on the cross. (...to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28)

**The work of the cross** is God's gift to anyone who, upon hearing the Word, falls in love with Christ and repents of their evil deeds. The sacrifice of the cross makes forgiveness and redemption possible for the one who denies himself and fully trusts in Him. (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13)

The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus makes this possible so that we may be placed in a new state—one in which He can work with us through the Holy Spirit for our restoration and perfection. (...sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2; Changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

***We are changed in His same image, from beauty to beauty, by the Spirit of the Lord!***

God commits to begin the work of perfecting our character only with those who love Him with all their heart, who deny themselves, and who enter into a covenant with Him.

Self-denial is a mandatory requirement for anyone who desires to begin this new life. (If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23) It is clear that self-denial is the starting point in the plan of salvation—without it, there is no new birth.

This is the moment of entering the territory of the Kingdom, of being born again—a birth that few truly experience and which remains a great mystery to most. Many desire to enter the Kingdom of God for the blessings found there, but without making a real change in their lives.

The Scripture is very clear on this matter. The Lord Jesus tells us that many will seek to enter, and shall not be able. (Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24)

# The New Birth

The Scripture tells us that in order to see the Kingdom of God and to enter it, we must be born again of God. (Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Ye must be born again! John 3:3, 7)

To dwell with God for eternity, a person must be born again and reach the standard required by the righteousness of the Kingdom—namely, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48)

The new birth—or receiving the right of entry and citizenship in the Kingdom of God—is the greatest event that can take place in a person's life. It is the moment when all things become new. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17–18)

Just as every biological birth is based on a seed, so Scripture tells us that the new birth is also based on a seed—and that seed is **"the Seed of God."**
(Whosoever is born of God... his seed remaineth in him. 1 John 3:9)

This Seed of God is planted in the heart of man. It carries the genetic code of God, from which a new creature is born—one that bears the nature of God, His way of being.

If we are born of God, from His Seed, it is vitally important to understand what this Seed contains—what is imprinted in its genetic code—so that we may understand what gives rise to the new life.

Every biological seed contains, at a microbiological level, all the basic components of the image of the one from whom it comes.

If we apply the same principle, then the Seed of God will also contain all the essential components of His image.

The first chapter of the Gospel of John identifies God as being one and the same with His Word. (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1)

Likewise, the Lord Jesus is described as the incarnate Word, who is one with the Father. (And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... John 1:14; I and my Father are one. John 10:30)

If God is identified as the Word—and so is His Son—then the Seed from which we are born must also contain the Word. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11)

Just as in a biological seed we do not find eyes or a heart, but the cells that correspond to them, so in the Seed of God we do not find long-suffering or kindness in their final form, but the embryonic words that correspond to their formation.

If we carefully study the Scripture, we can easily discern these words: "I will put (the seed) my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." (Hebrews 10:16); "...the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4) Thus, the Word of Christ/His Laws is sown into the heart of man and grows to maturity, bearing the fruit of the

Spirit/the image of Christ.

For example, within the seed, we find teachings such as "Resist not evil," which through the Holy Spirit grows into long-suffering, part of the Lord's image. Understanding this truth is crucial for comprehending how the new birth occurs and why we must be born of His Word. His Word/Laws must be born within us and mature, ultimately merging us with Him/being one with the incarnate Word. (That they all may be one in us. John 17:21)

We must not deceive ourselves by thinking that mere belief in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is sufficient. Without joyfully receiving His Seed/Word planted in our hearts, there will be no new birth. Such faith is dead and cannot save us!

The inseparable connection between His Word and the new birth is shown by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower and in many other places. In this parable, the Gospel of the Kingdom or the Word of Christ is described as God's seed, sown in the human heart, from which new life sprouts. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11; see also Matthew 13:19)

***Without joyfully receiving the Seed that is His Word, there is no new birth!***

The apostle James reiterates and strengthens this teaching, stating that salvation occurs only when one receives the implanted Word. (Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21)

Similarly, the apostle Peter reminds us of this seed, the Word/Gospel of Christ. (Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. 1 Peter 1:23, 25)

The apostle Paul likewise affirms that the birth from above occurs through the Word of Christ/the Gospel of the Kingdom. (For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15)

Just as the natural birth of a plant requires three elements—soil, seed, and water—the "new birth" similarly requires three main elements: the human heart, the Word of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**The human heart** is compared to soil. (But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15)

**The Word of Christ**/His Teaching is the Seed from which life germinates. From this seed, new life sprouts, containing the elements necessary for growth to spiritual maturity. (I will put my laws (the Seed) into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. Hebrews 10:16)

Caution! We must not confuse the Word of Christ—the Seed prophesied in Scripture—with the Law of Moses, which was given due to transgressions. (Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come. Galatians 3:19)

**The Holy Spirit** is the third essential element required for the new birth.

Just as biological seeds require water to sprout, the seed of God requires the Holy Spirit to germinate. (...by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5; ...born of the Spirit. John 3:8)

**The heart/soil of man**

The parable of the sower describes four types of soil:

1. Those who hear the Word of the Kingdom but do not believe because they do not understand. Here, the soil/heart is hardened. (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:12)
2. Those who hear and joyfully receive the Word of the Kingdom, but only temporarily. (The seed that fell on rocky places. Matthew 13:20)
3. Those who hear and accept the Word of the Kingdom, but life's cares choke it, preventing fruitfulness. (The seed that fell among thorns. Matthew 13:22)
4. Those who joyfully hear and accept the Word in a good heart, representing plowed, clean soil. (The seed that fell on good ground. Matthew 13:23)

In the first group, the heart is hardened, preventing the Seed from germinating. The second and third groups possess all necessary elements for germination: soil, Seed, and the Holy Spirit.

However, the second group lacks soil depth for mature growth and fruitfulness, while the third has unprepared, thorny ground. The fourth category represents a good heart, accepting the Seed/Word, growing through the Spirit, and bearing fruit (Fruit of the Spirit).

Since Scripture identifies multiple soil types, we must examine ourselves to understand our soil condition and, if thorny, to plow it. (Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns! Jeremiah 4:3)

The seed of God, its composition

Just as a human embryo contains all cells forming the future person—heart, eyes, brain—at a microbiological scale, similarly, God's seed contains all primary components of God's image. (...the new man, created after the image of God. Ephesians 4:24)

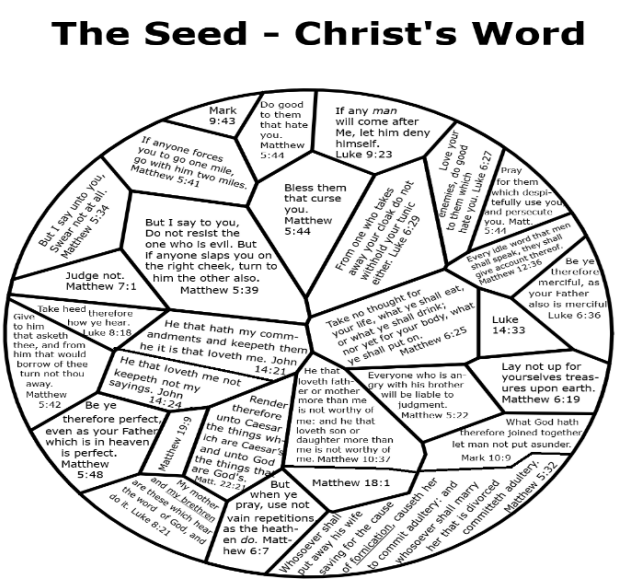
This divine seed contains the complete genetic information/Laws of the Kingdom, that is, Christ's commandments. Each teaching of Christ is a fundamental component of the Lord's image. (...the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4)

God plants in our hearts the Seed "which was to come"/the Word of Christ, effectively rewriting the genetic configuration of His image. (I will put (the seed) my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. Hebrews 10:16)

Below are some genetic information/teachings from the Kingdom, contained within God's Seed:

1. Do not resist an evil person... (Matthew 5:39)
2. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (Matthew 5:40)
3. Judge not, that you be not judged. (Matthew 7:1)

4. Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. (Luke 20:25)
5. Take heed that you do not despise... (Matthew 18:10)


The Seed – Christ's Word
Mark 9:43
Do good to them that hate you. Matthew 5:44
If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself. Luke 9:23
If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Matthew 5:41
Bless them that curse you. Matthew 5:44
Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Luke 6:27
Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Matt. 5:44
But I say unto you, Swear not at all. Matthew 5:34
But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39
From one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Luke 6:29
Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof. Matthew 12:36
Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful Luke 6:36
Judge not. Matthew 7:1
Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Matthew 6:25
Luke 14:33
Take heed therefore how ye hear. Luke 8:18
Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Matthew 5:42
He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me. John 14:21
He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings. John 14:24
He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37
Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Matthew 5:22
Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. Matthew 6:19
Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Matt. 22:21
What God hath therefore joined together let man not put asunder. Mark 10:9
Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48
Matthew 19:9
Matthew 18:1
But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do. Matthew 6:7
My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it. Luke 8:21
Whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. Matthew 5:32

**The illustration is not exhaustive**

**The Holy Spirit** will germinate this seed planted in us, germinating each teaching individually and working towards our growth and perfection. Thus, the teaching of non-resistance, when sown in us, will produce through the Spirit the fruit of peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness. (We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18; The Comforter, the Spirit of truth, will guide you into all truth. John 16:13)

All the teachings of the Lord are essential, forming part of the "embryo" from which a child of God is born. No teaching can be discarded. Each is a fundamental cell, akin to those in a human embryo, each destined to develop into part of the Lord's image. None is placed in the seed without purpose.

Every teaching contributes uniquely to forming the image of Christ within us. The Holy Spirit will not omit any and will work in us according to our growth. It is crucial to understand clearly: God will not admit us into His eternal Kingdom merely based on mental assent to the Lord's sacrifice, as many mistakenly believe. Rather, we must be born again from His seed and grow until we reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, as Scripture declares. (...till we all come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Ephesians 4:13)

Consider carefully: What would happen if we fragmented the seed, removing certain teachings? Could we still speak of a genuine birth from

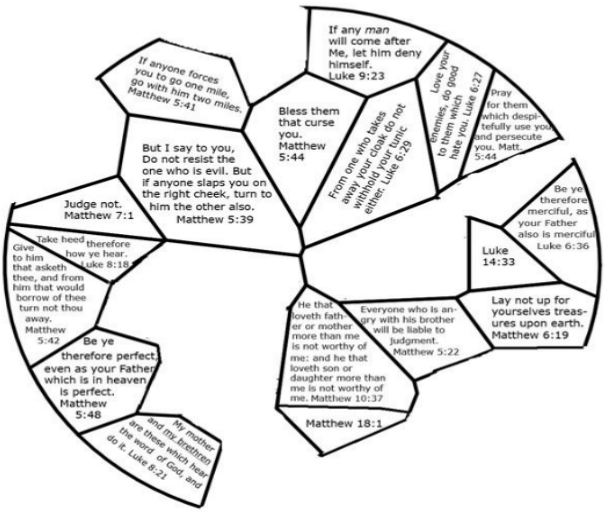
God? Imagine fragmenting a biological seed by removing the cells corresponding to the liver, heart, or brain—would such a seed lead to birth?

We must realize that if we do not fully accept the lordship of Christ in all aspects, and refuse any of His teachings, the seed will be incomplete and fail to germinate. (When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown by the wayside. Matthew 13:19) Disregarding even a single commandment prevents the Spirit from fully forming Christ's image in us—the fruit of the Spirit. (The goal of the commandment/the teachings of the Gospel is love. 1 Timothy 1:5)

If we fail to embrace the teachings of the Lord on non-resistance, judgment, self-denial, idle words, and blessing, the seed will lack what is necessary for germinating the life from above. God renews through the Spirit only those who wholeheartedly accept "the entire seed" and obey Him. (We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. Acts 5:32; ...by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5)

The Scripture warns us that today, as in the past, many distort the Word of God—the very Seed through which we must be born again. Satan's goal is to hinder or counterfeit this new birth, substituting it with a mere human birth. (For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God. 2 Corinthians 2:17)

## A corrupted seed – just parts of Christ's teachings


If any *man* will come after Me, let him deny himself. Luke 9:23
Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Luke 6:27
Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. Matt... 5:44
From one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Luke 6:29
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But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39
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Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. Matthew 6:19
He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37
Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Matthew 5:22
Matthew 18:1

We believe it is clear to everyone that new life cannot emerge from corrupted seed. Likewise, we all know that a genetically modified seed produces a plant resembling the original, yet modified throughout its entire structure. Similarly, if we accept a modified teaching, we will be born from that teaching, not from God.

Below are some teachings absent from the hearts of many who claim to be "born again":

1. Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. (Luke 20:25)
2. Do not resist an evil person... (Matthew 5:39)
3. Bless those who curse you. (Luke 6:28)
4. Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)
5. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)

**Verification:** Are these teachings too difficult for you, and can you not bear them? (Many... after hearing these words, said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" John 6:60)

We must understand clearly that the new birth from God cannot occur if we disregard the Word of Christ planted in our hearts. (Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21; ...I will put my laws into their hearts. Hebrews 10:16)

No teaching can be dismissed. Each serves a purpose; none were given randomly. Some teachings clear or plow the ground—addressing judgment, condemnation, fleshly lusts, desires of the eyes—while others cultivate patience, kindness, peace, and love.

Only by obeying Christ's commandments can we put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man created in God’s image. (Put on the new man, created after the image of God. Ephesians 4:24)

The new man's garments must be woven with kindness, patience, gentleness, and love. (Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. But above all these things put on love... Colossians 3:12, 14) This is the wedding garment—the attributes of the new man—which we must wear to resemble the Lord Jesus.

We encourage you not to read the Scripture casually, but to study it carefully. Seek and apply teachings that plow your heart's soil and cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit/Christ’s image.

**Seriously ask yourself:** Is the seed sown in your heart truly God's seed? Have you accepted the Lord’s commandments regarding defamation and blessing? Do you practice them, and do they bear fruit? Carefully

examine yourself over a week or two to understand your spiritual condition.

**Reflect deeply**: Does the Holy Spirit rebuke you when you speak evil? Evaluate if you are genuinely living the new life to which you were called. Many are called to bless, yet few truly do so. (Bless, for to this you were called: to inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:9)

If you speak negatively about the government, politicians, healthcare workers, neighbors, or anyone who wrongs you, it indicates that new life has not truly begun in you. (Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. And all these things are from God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

Understand clearly: For one born from above, sins like defamation are accidental, not habitual. (Whoever is born of God does not sin. 1 John 3:9)

**The Lord Jesus** teaches that only by rejecting our old self and abandoning old ways can we enter a new life in God's Kingdom—a life of discipleship and servitude to Him. (If anyone comes to Me and does not hate... even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:26)

The Lord enters the New Covenant with us only when we surrender our will, accepting Him as our Master and submitting fully to His teachings. At that moment, new life and discipleship begin.

When Christ becomes our greatest treasure, prompting us to abandon old things, He enters a covenant of love with us. (The man who finds it hides it; and for joy over it, goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Matthew 13:44) This is not a transactional relationship, but a covenant of love—like marriage. (When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine. Ezekiel 16:8)

God initiates His perfecting work in us from this point, completing it only if we remain faithful. (Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it. Philippians 1:6)

To be Christ's disciple means enrolling in His school, learning heavenly truths from Him, and incorporating them into our lives—essentials for Kingdom living. From day one of this new life, we become His disciples, servants obedient in everything, moving toward holiness. (Having been set free from sin, and having become servants of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. Romans 6:22)

## Personal Reflection Questions

**Examine yourself thoroughly:** Are you truly born again? Have you abandoned worldly things? Have you entered into covenant with the Lord? Are worldly pleasures still present in your life? (1 John 2:15,16)

**Check yourself:** Are you submissive to authorities ordained by God? Do you avoid taxes or engage in defamation?

Have you earnestly sought the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and love, accepting Christ's teachings fully?

If you've entered the New Covenant, have you pledged obedience to His

laws planted in your heart—laws of righteousness, peace, and love?

Have you truly denied yourself, allowing God's Word to flourish in your heart? (Luke 9:23)

Is Christ truly Lord of your life, or do you only call Him "Lord" without complete obedience?

Is there any teaching or command of Christ that you neglect or disagree with? (Examine: Matthew 12:36; Matthew 18:9,10; Titus 3:2; Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 9:23; Luke 14:26)

Please reflect carefully, as your eternity depends on your current spiritual state. Do not be deceived into thinking mere adherence to group teachings pleases God. He communes only with those growing to the fullness of His Son's stature.

If you haven't earnestly pursued righteousness, begin now. Allow God to lead you to a pure fellowship where you can healthily grow toward spiritual maturity! (2 Timothy 2:22)

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**TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST**

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The purpose of creation was for man to live in communion with God, according to the laws that govern His Kingdom. This is the highest calling to which man can aspire. (Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:24)

We have a soul and a spirit. God has endowed us with the ability to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love, and to choose. This is because He predetermined in His plan that we should be like Him. Yet He did not stop at this mere likeness.

God created us and equipped us with these capacities so that we would use them. It is our responsibility to develop them and to work together with Him in order to reach "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (And He gave some to be… pastors and teachers, to equip the saints… until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

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